



## Lexington Public Schools

### *Office of the Superintendent of Schools*

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**To:** Estabrook Parents and Guardians

**From:** Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

**Re:** Update on Estabrook School Environmental Concerns

**Date:** September 10, 2010

This afternoon, I met with the Superintendent's Advisory Committee to review the latest PCB test results and to discuss next steps. I am pleased to report that all levels of PCBs in indoor air have improved substantially. Many rooms are now below the public health targets suggested by the EPA. According to our consultant, EH & E, the improvement is a direct result of flushing air on September 4 and 5, 2010 and modifying ventilation systems to maximize delivery of outdoor air into the building.

Given the much lower levels of PCBs and an analysis of the site specific risk assessment for Estabrook, the Advisory Committee agreed unanimously that it is safe to reopen the Estabrook School on Monday, September 13 for all grades. Kindergarten will be full-day and all transportation will run as normal.

Listed below are some of the short-term steps that have taken place since the last PCB measurements were made:

1. As of today, all of the caulk surrounding the interior side of the panels, below the windows, has been encapsulated with an EPA approved polyethylene strip and a silicon caulk. We recently learned that these panels were installed with a caulking material that contains PCBs.
2. All unit ventilators have been inspected, repaired (if necessary) and cleaned thoroughly to maximize air intake (600 cubic feet per minute).

Listed below are some of the measures that will be completed this weekend:

1. Additional ventilation will be added to all four kindergarten rooms. We are taking this measure as a result of a recent ventilation experiment in one kindergarten room that reduced the PCB levels from 426 to 118 nanograms per cubic meter. The EPA guideline of 114 includes a large safety factor. Based on this result, we are confident that the extra ventilation in the three remaining kindergarten classrooms will reduce the PCB levels to recommended EPA targets.
2. Additional air samples will take place, including tests to determine if the most recent encapsulation process further lowers PCB levels (see item #1 above).
3. A 'snow' fence will be erected along the drip line of the school perimeter to prevent inadvertent entry into work area and for precautionary reasons.

Depending on the test results we receive next week, the Advisory Committee may need to consider intermediate options beyond one week. One such option may include shifting classrooms in the kindergarten wing of the building to the central office. If that option is necessary, we will remove the ceiling tiles in that wing (rooms one through six), if it is determined they are the source of airborne

PCBs. The two first grade classrooms housed in that wing would be relocated elsewhere in the Estabrook School. Other options may be discussed and finalized once we have further test results.

On Tuesday evening, September 14, the School Committee will meet at the Clarke Middle School auditorium at 7:30 p.m. to discuss the Estabrook School PCB issues. I urge all interested residents to attend. In addition, the Superintendent's Advisory Committee will meet on the evening of Thursday, September 16, after we receive additional test results. As information becomes available, the members of the Advisory Committee will assess any new information and make necessary recommendations.

The most recent EH &E report is attached to this email. The members of the Advisory Committee can be reached at *Estabrook.advisory@gmail.com*.

Our first priority is safety for all occupants of the Estabrook School. As we move forward through this challenging problem, your suggestions and opinions are welcome.

Members of the Superintendent's Advisory Committee

Sandra Trach, Principal  
Katie O'Hare-Gibson, teacher  
Gerard Cody, Director of the Lexington Health Division  
Pat Goddard, Director of Public Facilities  
Charlie Favazzo, Estabrook parent  
Henry Houh, Estabrook parent  
Kamala Soparkar, Estabrook parent  
Harold Payson, Estabrook parent  
Karin Travers, Estabrook parent  
Alessandro Alessandrini, School Committee  
Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent of Schools